

GREAT's ADA Paratransit Program

The federal American's with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a civil rights act that, among other things, requires equal access to public transportation for persons with disabilities. Public transit systems such as Greenville Area Transit (GREAT) must take special steps to make regular bus service accessible to persons with disabilities. Regular accessible bus service is intended to be the primary mode of public transportation for persons with disabilities.

The ADA also requires curb-to-curb "paratransit" service as a "safety net" for persons, whose disabilities prevent use of accessible, fixed route bus service. The federal government adopted minimum criteria that transit systems have to meet in operating this complementary paratransit service. Complementary paratransit service is intended to offer a comparable level of service to that provided by the regular bus service. Paratransit service is not required nor intended to meet all the transportation needs of persons with disabilities. Rather, it is intended to provide public transportation in a more specialized form.

GREAT's ADA Paratransit Program is designed to meet the service criteria established by the federal government which is service is to be provided within a 3/4 mile corridor of the regular bus routes. In addition to this requirement, GREAT has added the movie theatre complex as well as the Vocational Rehabilitation offices on Highway 43 to its ADA service area in order to be responsive to this group of public transit users. The paratransit program provides next-day, shared rides within 3/4 of a mile on either side of fixed route bus service. No assistants or aides are provided by GREAT. Riders may be accompanied by a personal care attendant, if required, at no additional charge. Fares are \$2.00 per person each way. Ten and Twenty Ride Passes may be purchased from the City's Public Works Department. Hours and days of service are the same as the regular bus system. There is no service on Sundays or New Year's Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day. This program provides transportation services to individuals with disabilities that prevent them from riding the regular accessible bus service offered by GREAT.

GREAT has developed an application that will be used to determine eligibility for the program. In order to qualify, the applicant must be certified by a licensed health care professional that the disability negatively impacts the person's ability to board, ride and exit a fixed route bus. This might include being unable to travel to or from bus stops, being unable to board or exit buses even by using the accessibility features, or being unable to understand how to ride the bus system. The federal government allows a time frame of twenty-one (21) days to determine eligibility once GREAT receives the application. However, GREAT works as quickly as possible to respond to these applications.

Once approved, the paratransit service is provided for GREAT by Pitt Area Transit (PATs).